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ABSTRACT

This paper presents information from a series of preliminary asynchronous international conversations across four cultural contexts that focus on enhancing the profile of teachers in curriculum decision making. The paper challenges education systems to match the rhetoric about the place of teachers in curriculum decision making with curriculum change and professional development practices. It sets a context for the preliminary conversations by addressing the place of and space for teachers in curriculum decision making, their readiness to engage in it, and the potential for them to have authentic inclusion in curriculum decision making at the classroom, school, and wider policy levels. The paper also considers the methodological framework within which the issue was developed and how the processes associated with it have developed. The three appendixes offer initial comments from participants, followup comments from participants, and an invitation to be part of the continuing conversation. (Contains 25 references.) (SM)

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Enhancing the profile of teachers as curriculum decision-makers: Some international perspectives

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It is teachers, who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it

(Words of Lawrence Stenhouse inscribed on a memorial plaque which was placed by his former students in the grounds of the University of East Anglia, Norwich, England)

ABSTRACT

This paper addresses aspects of the five cluster of issues as outlined in the theme for the 1999 Annual Meeting. The paper presents a critical challenge to education systems - that they match the rhetoric about the place of teachers in curriculum decision-making with curriculum change and professional development practices which seek to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making in ways that recognise their legitimate place in, and create authentic space(s) for their engagement in curriculum leadership

The purposes of the paper are to report from a series of preliminary international conversations (asynchronous) across four cultural contexts leading up to the Annual Meeting and to initiate the opportunity for others to join this conversation at, and following the Annual Meeting. The conversation focuses on ways of enhancing the profile of teachers in curriculum-decision-making.

The paper sets a context for these preliminary conversations by addressing both the place of and space for teachers in curriculum decision-making, their readiness to engage in it, and the potential for them to have authentic inclusion in it at classroom, school and wider policy levels. There is also some consideration given to the methodological framework within which the paper and the processes associated with it have developed.

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Much of the work in this paper is based upon working collaboratively with teachers and school leaders in a range of projects in recent years. Funding assistance and other forms of support from the Australian Research Council, the National Schools Network, the National Professional Development Project, Education Queensland (the then Effective Learning and Teaching Unit and the Centre for leadership Excellence), the Australian Curriculum Studies Association, and Queensland University of Technology's Office of Research and Faculty of Education are also gratefully acknowledged.

INTRODUCTION

At the two previous Annual Meetings (Elliott, Brooker, Macpherson, McInman & Thurlow, 1997; Macpherson, 1998), we reported progress in a collaborative research project funded jointly by the Australian Research Council and the Queensland State Department of Education (now known as Education Queensland). The focus of the research was on theorising curriculum leadership for effective teaching and learning. The project is now completed and a monograph, Places and Spaces for Teachers in Curriculum Leadership (Macpherson, Aspland, Brooker & Elliott 1999), has just been published by the Australian Curriculum Studies Association. We are pursuing, however, two areas that became evident as the project proceeded. One relates to the engagement of various stakeholders (particularly teachers, students and parents) in curriculum leadership; while to other focuses on the professional development implications for teachers seeking to have an authentic engagement in curriculum leadership. It is the second of these two areas which is the concern of this paper.

This paper, then, is set within both the outcomes of the research project and a continuing process of collaborative investigation. An emerging theoretical framework (which defines our view of curriculum leadership; describes some of our ideas about professional development; and introduces Darling-Hammond's (1998) views about supporting teachers and teaching) is presented below. An outline of the preliminary conversations we have had with colleagues in a small number of cultural contexts is also provided. This leads us to a consideration of commonalities and diversities across these contexts in relation to enhancing the profile of teachers as curriculum decision-makers. We then reflect on the process which we have used to develop this paper; and we ask how the initial steps might develop into a more sustained conversation (See Applebee, 1996) about how professional development approaches and activities might enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making.

Before continuing with the paper, we want to share the comments of two of the reviewers of the proposal which was submitted for this paper. A third reviewer found "the structure of paper proposal compelling and the potential strong indeed". While two reviewers considered the proposal acceptable, they had this to say:

> *I find this proposal highly ironic. Once again, university researchers speak "for" classroom teachers, all in the name of "enhancing the profile of teachers as curriculum decision-makers". The university people obviously have chosen the theoretical framework and have directed the intentions of this paper. What classroom teachers were involved in this supposed example of "critical collaborative cation research"? From what I can tell, it's only the university researchers who are collaborating to develop "global networks". (Reviewer #1)*

> *A critical question, not addressed or even referred to, is whether teachers want to take an active role in the development of curriculum. I hope that curriculum people from -- (a state in the USA), where curriculum has been, by law, teacher and school-based for nearly nine years, will join the discussion. After years of effort, -- teachers frankly want to know what to teach and when from some higher authority rather than be intimately involved in the development of curriculum. Interestingly, in systems where high stakes accountability merges with decentralized curriculum development, teachers do not want to take time to develop their curriculum design skills but prefer to focus time and energy on instructional delivery. This phenomenon needs to be part of the discussion, as it radically affects the nature of professional development. (Reviewer #2)*

This paper does not speak for teachers – teachers are able to speak for themselves. Nevertheless, the paper is set within a view that celebrates the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making. One only has to recall the view of Lawrence Stenhouse (1975) that it is teachers who, in the end, will change the world of the school by understanding it; or that of Richard Bates (1991) more recently, which claims that teachers are, whether governments wish it or not, the front line operators of curriculum. None of us, we hazard to guess, would disagree with these sentiments. BUT, while much of the current rhetoric in policy-type documents (for example, Australian Curriculum Studies association, 1996; Education Queensland, 1997; Education Department, Hong Kong, 1997; Blunkett, 1997; Finkelstein, 1998; McLaughlin, 1997; Stokes, 1997; Downes, 1998; Maclure, 1998) continues to accord teachers a significant place in curriculum decision-making, there does not always appear to be a

matching of this rhetoric in the lived reality of teachers in schools and classrooms, nor the sort of professional support that values the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making.

At this point, it is appropriate to pause and define what we mean by the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making. It has to do with recognising and valuing the role teachers do play (predominantly in schools and classrooms). It is not so much to do with their direct involvement in the actual construction and dissemination of policy as with the inclusion of their lifeworld perspectives in ongoing reconstructions of curriculum decision-making at all levels. It is to make the perspectives and practices of teachers more central in constructions of curriculum decision-making processes at large. It is not about bringing teachers geographically "in from the margins" to a central nerve centre. Rather it is about:

> acknowledging teachers' place in curriculum decision-making;
>
> supporting their ongoing work; and
>
> developing a curriculum culture whereby teachers have a crucial input to the shape which curriculum decision-making takes at all levels by whatever means are appropriate.

In saying this, we must be realistic in recognising that teachers will have different ways of viewing such a position. All will want to get on with the job at the classroom and school levels; some may want direct input to curriculum decision-making processes at other levels; others will be happy to pass on their perspectives; while there will be those who are willing to be more visible in taking an advocacy role for promoting the significant role which teachers' perspectives should play in shaping policies and processes associated with curriculum decision-making.

We want to engage in a conversation, then, across cultural and geographical contexts and sites of educational endeavour – a conversation which listens to perspectives drawn directly and indirectly from the lived reality of teachers themselves in order to understand better how they might be supported and sustained in their efforts to engage more authentically in curriculum decision-making at the levels of classrooms, schools and wider policy contexts.

The process that has been used to develop this paper is an initial reconnaissance (a mapping of the curriculum and professional development landscape, if you like – a landscape which represents a broad spectrum of opinion as illustrated by the reviewers' comments above). The process is very much a beginning for us as teacher educators - a beginning which will identify some tentative ideas about what might be a unique role for us in unified and strategic alliances which aim to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making. The search is for a basis to argue for the centrality (NOT the centralisation) of teachers in curriculum decision-making.

AN EMERGING THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONVERSATIONS

The paper is framed, firstly, by a view which sees teachers as curriculum makers (Clandinin & Connelly, 1992; Brubaker, 1994; Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995; Moller & Katzenmeyer, 1996; and Macpherson, Aspland, Elliott, Proudford, Shaw & Thurlow, 1996); secondly, by an approach to curriculum decision-making conceptualised as curriculum leadership for effective learning and teaching (Macpherson et al, 1996; Macpherson, Elliott & Aspland, 1995; and Macpherson, 1998); and, thirdly, by a set of emerging propositions about professional development within this approach to curriculum leadership (Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland & Elliott, 1998).

The three parts of our emerging theoretical framework are outlined below.

(i) The place of teachers in curriculum decision-making

Briefly, curriculum leadership for effective learning and teaching is viewed as any initiative that teachers in the multi-faceted contexts of teaching/learning sites may undertake to encourage more effective learning and teaching. It is about leading learning and seizing opportunities that appear to have the potential to enhance learning and teaching experiences and outcomes.

What follows is a brief extract from the first chapter of our monograph (Macpherson & Brooker in Macpherson, Aspland, Brooker & Elliott, 1999). It presents a view which places teachers centrally in curriculum decision-making – a view which identifies school and personal factors as critical in describing and understanding the place of teachers in curriculum decision-making.

Curriculum leadership, in our view, is any initiative that teachers undertake to encourage more effective learning and teaching. Our work confirms the centrality of teachers in curriculum leadership. We have no evidence to support a view of curriculum leadership which positions only those with designated positions in the school structure (e.g. principal, deputy principal, head of a subject department) as curriculum leaders. It is clear that curriculum leadership is an artefact of the particular school context in which it occurs and that images of curriculum, organisational and social factors, and the personal characteristics, are important in shaping curriculum leadership in that school context. Curriculum leadership is constructed out of the complexities and problematics of a rich interplay between people and their environment. We also identify that curriculum leadership is a phenomenon that emerges in response to opportunities that occur both at macro (e.g. starting a new school) and micro levels (e.g. implementation of curriculum policy in a single class).

In summary, our work has brought us to a point where we identify that curriculum leadership involves those actions which are intimately related to the knowledge, values and attitudes that teachers hold about their curriculum context, which interact with their personal qualities, resulting in actions for improved learning and teaching in that context. Furthermore, it recognises that

- people (and, particularly, people working together) are important in any teaching/learning setting;
- leadership is a shared phenomenon among a range of stakeholders who make complementary contributions to the shape and practice of leadership at any one site;
- collaborative effort is desirable in promoting leadership for effective learning and teaching;
- people need to seize opportunities to engage in leadership action; at each school site, leadership action is shaped by three contextual factors (the images of curriculum held by people, the organisational structures and the social dynamics among people); and
- individual personal factors are important in mediating the contextual elements and seizing the opportunities; and the mix of contextual elements is unique to each school site of leadership action, and impacts upon the way persons individually and collectively mediate these elements and seize opportunities for leadership action. (Adapted)

Our position adds other significant stakeholders such as students and parents to the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making. If curriculum leadership is a shared phenomenon at a particular school site, and if it seeks to include all stakeholders in its enactment, then it follows that we must be interested in the socially-constructed contexts and processes which shape leadership as a shared phenomenon at the levels of both conceptualisation and practice. Considerations of alienation (for example, Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 1996) and calls for partnerships and collaborative efforts in education (for example, Australian Curriculum Studies Association, 1996; Education Queensland, 1997) point to the need of finding authentic ways of listening to the voices of these stakeholders and including them in curriculum leadership action (or practice).

From our perspective curriculum leadership is a shared phenomenon at a teaching/learning site, and comes from an understanding of curriculum where the teacher is curriculum maker (and motivated to engage via an understanding of contextual factors and personal possibilities). In this way, we argue conceptually and believe that there is a PLACE for teachers in curriculum leadership, and that such a PLACE will find its location in many PLACES geographically – classrooms, schools, systems as well as broader community and societal levels. Such a perspective opens the way for a more inclusive engagement in curriculum leadership by all stakeholders rather than being confined to those who are in recognised or official leadership positions in a school. While the implications of such a view are largely played out in all sorts of mixes at the local school level, there are, nevertheless, messages for those working at policy and system levels and other areas described above concerning the composition of the monograph's audience. The possibilities are considerable, and these are what we conceptualise as the SPACES for teachers in curriculum leadership.

(ii) A set of propositions about professional development

The framework includes a number of emerging propositions about professional development which nest within this view of curriculum leadership and which aim to support and sustain teachers in taking their central place in, and seizing the opportunities in their spaces for curriculum decision-making. One proposition states, for example, that there is a critical link between an individual teacher's professional development and the development of the school curriculum. Another puts the view that each context is unique and the significance of this uniqueness needs to be recognised as part of a process of professional development before curriculum leadership initiatives can be effective. It is noted with this

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proposition that development requires the identification of a 'comfort zone' (in the sense of what teachers are familiar with) from which change can be introduced. These propositions provide a basis for thinking about the ways in which teachers' engagement in curriculum decision-making (their spaces for curriculum leadership) might be enhanced in ways that are sensitive to and collaborative with teachers in their respective sites. The propositions, along with some reflections are presented below

THE PROPOSITIONS

1. Each context is unique and the significance of this uniqueness needs to be recognised as part of a process of professional development before curriculum leadership initiatives can be effective. In particular, this development requires the identification of a 'comfort zone' from which change can be introduced.

2. There is a critical link between an individual teacher's professional development and the development of the school curriculum.

3. Challenge in the form of 'spirited debate' is important to professional development.

4. Networking is seen as an important aspect of all projects designed to bring about curriculum change. Given the complexities of schools, support groups are needed both within the school and between schools.

5. The process of action research is a suitable format to introduce the ideas of research where teachers and principals have not been familiar with research issues.

6. Professional development of teachers and principals is intimately related.

REFLECTING ON THE PROPOSITIONS

We invite you, as the reader, to consider these propositions, issues and implications. You may wish to think about and articulate the sorts of professional learnings which occur within the dynamic interplay in the world of teachers' work of curriculum leadership, between action research (which is critical and collaborative) and professional development. These might include, for example:

With reference to the first proposition:-
the development of a mindset that values critical analysis and reconstruction of one's curriculum leadership actions in ways that are contextually responsive and unique;

With reference to the second proposition:-
a willingness and ability to advocate and be accountable for change within the unique contexts of individual schools and classrooms;

With reference to the third proposition:-
an ability to articulate a position about curriculum leadership, action research and professional development in a range of forums;

With reference to the fourth proposition:-
the development of a mindset that values working with others in generating professional knowledge and that emphasises collaboration rather than competition;

With reference to the fifth proposition:-
an ability to engage in the processes associated with critical analysis and reconstruction of curriculum leadership actions using action research which is viewed as much as a way of thinking as a way of enacting, and

With reference to the sixth proposition:-
an ability to initiate, facilitate and sustain change and transformation through linking curriculum leadership, action research and professional development for all involved in each individual and unique context.

These professional learnings may be further elaborated at three levels, namely the levels of self, others and the context, for it is only if professional development impacts upon these three levels concurrently, that sustainable change can be maintained in whatever professional work context. We invite you to interact with us in focussing upon the 'unfinished business' of this paper, that is, putting professional learning up front as we continue to address the issues within the context of curriculum leadership for effective learning and teaching.

(Macpherson, I., Brooker, R., Aspland, T. & Elliott, B. 1998:81-3)

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(iii) Some strategies for professional development

The theoretical framework makes reference to Darling Hammond's (1998:12) strategies which emerge from her view of a national report about teachers and teaching. Her view is a way of taking the propositions outlined above from tentative critical commentary to informed action. She says:

> *... the school reform movement has ignored the obvious: what teachers know and can do makes the crucial difference in what children learn. And ways school systems organize their work makes a big difference in what teachers can accomplish. New courses, tests, and curriculum reforms can be important starting points, but they are meaningless if teachers cannot use them well. Policies can only improve schools if the people in them are armed with the knowledge, skills, and supports they need. Student learning in this country will improve only when we focus our efforts on improving teaching. ...*
>
> *A comprehensive approach would include at least three kinds of strategies, in addition to continued basic research on teaching and teacher learning:*
>
> *Support for professional development initiatives based on growing knowledge about student learning and teacher learning and aimed at the twin challenges toward the new standards and the teaching of diverse learners;*
>
> *Research and documentation of these efforts that describes in substantive detail how schools and schools of education are reshaping teachers' learning opportunities and evaluating whether and how such changes benefit teaching and learning;*
>
> *Policy development and evaluation that examine how policies might support the redesign of teacher education and professional development and the increased access of low-income and minority students to well-prepared teachers and well-designed schools and that assess the effects of various policy designs.*

Enhancing the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making, therefore, has to do with the centrality of teachers in curriculum processes; and with professional development opportunities which consolidate and expand both the place of and space for teachers in curriculum leadership. Darling Hammond's comments help to focus a commitment to BOTH the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making; AND teacher-centredness (within the contexts of schools and classrooms, particularly) in professional development actions.

THE METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH THE CONVERSATIONS DEVELOPED

A considerable amount of energy in our work has centred around the use of narratives (see Gough, 1994) and conversations (See Feldman, 1996) in generating case study accounts of curriculum leadership as perceived by teachers (and more recently by parents and students) at a relatively small number of individual teaching/learning sites in Australia, Hong Kong, the UK, and the USA (using the Habermas (1987) notion of lifeworld perspective). While these accounts are largely descriptive, they have been used as a basis for generating propositions about meanings/interpretations and implications for both policy and practice. Within an action research framework, the accounts have been generative of propositions (as outlined above, for example) emerging from a critical perspective which values opportunities for stakeholders to critique "what is" as a basis for considering and acting upon "what could be" in terms of optimising learning opportunities and outcomes for all learners and of creating and discovering space for the voices of significant stakeholders in curriculum leadership (See Brooker & Macpherson, 1998; Macpherson& Brooker, 1998, 1998a).

A difficulty arises, however, when an attempt is made to move from the local to the global with these descriptive data from which, at best, tentative ideas have been generated. One reaction is to take a positivist way of thinking and to use such data to develop a survey instrument for distribution to and completion by a much wider (and supposedly a more representative) sample of the relevant population. Such a reaction is not new; and there are countless examples of using a mixed methodology (for example, Brewer & Hunter, 1992; Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989) in an attempt to confirm case study data (or to use a case study approach to amplify survey findings). Indeed, we have used such an approach in some of our recent work (Elliott et al, 1997). Another reaction, deemed to be post-

positivist has been to use a grounded theory approach (for example, Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998; Richards and Richards, 1998) where we have seen the development of software packages to manage unstructured qualitative data.

We do not argue that such reactions are inappropriate. Rather, we are engaging in a reflective search within the context of our own work for a way of analysing, interpreting, theorising and authenticating localised and largely qualitative case study data which does not rely on positivist and quasi-quantitative approaches and strategies. If data are generated through narratives and conversations (Aspland, Macpherson, Brooker & Elliott, 1998), then these data, we maintain, may also be analysed and interpreted from critical perspectives via the ongoing use of narratives and conversations (See also Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

Action Research has always been an iterative process and has been characterised often as a spiral of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis, 1994). Our work, using action research, has emphasised the critical and the collaborative aspects - critical in the sense of having theorised positions about curriculum leadership for effective learning and teaching and about teachers' (and other significant stakeholders') place and readiness to engage in curriculum leadership; and collaborative (in that we have worked with teachers and not on teachers) in collecting, analysing and interpreting data contained in initial narratives and transcripts and in summaries of ongoing conversations (Aspland, Macpherson, Proudford & Whitmore, 1996; Aspland, Macpherson, Brooker & Elliott, 1998; Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland & Elliott, 1998).

The methodological framework emerging from our reflective search is seeking to elaborate on that iterative process, by articulating a place for critical friend networks which seek to take the narratives and the conversations about the narratives (which are about analysing, interpreting and theorising the data) beyond the local to the global. A significant part of this elaboration is to define critical friend networks (Chapman, 1996), and to establish principles and protocols for inviting colleagues to be members of these networks and for facilitating and maintaining the networks as a hermeneutic spiral.

Critical friend networks as a hermeneutic spiral (taken from the notion of a hermeneutic circle, as outlined by Gallagher, 1992; and seen as an iterative series of interactions involving researchers and their colleagues and focussing on ongoing critical interpretations of data and data analyses) intertwining with an action research spiral are considered at a number of stages. Firstly, university researchers may collaborate with colleagues in higher education, locally, nationally and internationally to refine critical frameworks which surround initial and emerging ideas for ongoing research; and then with colleagues at the levels of policy and systemic leadership to define the potential relevance of initial and emerging ideas for ongoing research; and colleagues at the levels of school and classroom practice to define the potential applicability of such ideas for empowering practitioners to critique and reconstruct themselves, their professional work and their work contexts. Critical friends who emerge at this stage, it is argued, have the potential to contribute by scrutinising localised descriptive data; of analysing and interpreting it critically and collaboratively; and taking it forwards as critically-informed and collaborative thinking and action. Such networks could then move into successive stages (Carspeckan, 1996) in tandem with the notion of an action research spiral; and they could be the vehicle through which a living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) emerges and impacts upon both policy and practice at local and more global levels. The merging of the two spirals helps to emphasise the importance of theorising by practitioners, academics and policy makers in collaboration and to narrow the gap often perceived as a bifurcation of the irrelevance of theory to practice on the one hand and of the atheoretical nature of practice on the other (Smith, 1987).

The networks, then, provide a means whereby research participants can step outside their research in order to critique and reconstruct their research processes and outcomes in collaboration with significant others (Davidson Wasser & Bresler, 1996; Newman & MacDonald, 1993; Rossman, 1993,) in an ongoing or iterative manner. The networks, in fact, become an iterative and cumulative vehicle for establishing and maintaining meta narratives and conversations about the research and its implications in the more global arenas of policy formulation and implementation within education systems. The inclusion of critical friends at the levels of higher education; policy and systems; and schools and classrooms (which could well include parents and students) has the potential to harness the distinctive perspectives represented in educational communities into an exciting praxis of analytical investigation, critical interpretation and reconstructive action.

The use of critical friend networks as a hermeneutic spiral seeks to value the subjective ways in which stakeholders see and interpret their lifeworld and to incorporate these perspectives in both descriptive and critically interpretive terms at the stages of analysis and application. A hermeneutic spiral as a meta conversation does not ignore or try to simplify the complexities of such subjectivities. Rather, it welcomes such complexities as representing a more authentic and thicker picture of lived reality, and as a basis for pursuing an iterative conversation in the search for appropriate actions in the short-term and for new challenges in the long-term in both local and broader global arenas.

So, it is within this emerging methodological framework that we have developed the remainder of this paper via a series of very preliminary asynchronous conversations.

From contacts made with people in the four cultural and geographical contexts mentioned above in our earlier work, we invited a number of people to peruse some of the documentation of our work. We asked these people specifically to think about what we as teacher educators can do in collaboration with teachers to enhance the profile of teachers as curriculum decision-makers in and beyond the classroom. We asked them to frame their written response, in consultation with teachers, in terms of what they perceived as the place of teachers in, and space for (readiness and potential) them to engage in curriculum decision-making in their respective cultural contexts.

A draft of this paper was then sent to all participants (via E Mail and attachment) for perusal and comment. Participants were encouraged to communicate with one another if they so wished. Participants provided follow-up comments. A further version of the paper was then developed, and a copy sent to each of the participants for information. At this point, participants were invited to offer any further comments that they would like mentioned at the actual paper presentation. This further version of the paper, meanwhile, was forwarded to the session discussant (Jean Clandinin).

The presentation, based on this version of the paper, becomes, then, a way of expanding the iterative process and extending the notion of a hermeneutic spiral. As participants at the 1999 Annual Meeting who are attending this session, you are invited to consider joining us and looking for ways of continuing the conversation.

We believe that we can move ahead together within this sort of methodological framework to develop propositions, theoretical abstractions and informed actions regarding the enhanced profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making.

REPORTING THE ASYNCHRONOUS CONVERSATION – PART I

The introduction to this paper indicated how the reviewers' comments shaped our thinking about and processes for developing the paper. We stated that the process upon which the paper developed was very much an initial reconnaissance. There may well be a view that that the conversations to this point have not really been conversations at all! Nevertheless, we see that the communications which have occurred lay a foundation for a much more interactive process in the future.

There is no doubt that there is a diversity of perspectives about:

> teachers and their work;
>
> who wants to talk about it and in what forums;
>
> who should talk for teachers about their work; and
>
> what sorts of policy and decision-making structures are appropriate for situating teachers' work centrally in conceptions of curriculum decision-making.

Such diversity can be detected within the written commentaries received from people who agreed to participate with us in developing this paper, and we invite to read what they have to say (See Appendix A).

REFLECTING ON THE ASYNCHRONOUS CONVERSATION – PART I

Our thoughts arising from a reading of Appendix A are offered to you as a basis for entering the conversation with your experiences and contexts in mind.

- Considerations of place of and space for teachers in curriculum leadership (or curriculum decision-making) all appear to occur within a context of broader curriculum change. Within this broader context, there are trends which create tensions, not the least of which relates to a greater demand for accountability in terms of standards on the one hand, and statements about devolution of decision-making to the local level on the other. Are notions of place and space for teachers in curriculum leadership, then, more a pipe dream than a likely reality?

- Within the tensions alluded to above, there needs to be an emphasis on such matters as a shared and culturally-sensitive conceptual understanding and language in considerations of enhancing the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making. For example, ongoing clarifications of what is meant by the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making are important.

- There seem to be discernible shifts in emphasis away from the macro (systemic and school levels) to the micro (teaching and learning at the classroom level). Teachers appear to have a central place in what happens in their classrooms and schools, and there are still opportunities for them to engage in curriculum decision-making. The question here concerns how much the boundaries within which they can operate have been determined by trends external to the school.

- What actually happens in each cultural and geographical context is obviously not universal within that context; and values and beliefs create a significant impact on curriculum thinking and practice. A variety of school factors (how teachers work together, how principals see teachers' roles, how prepared teachers are to undertake curriculum change at the school and classroom level, etc) appear to be significant in creating the unique curriculum context at each site. Different imperatives seem also to emerge, taking into account the specific characteristics of teaching/learning sites.

- While there is much that is happening within classrooms which focuses on teaching and learning (and the ongoing improvement and reconstruction of them both!), there is not always the facilitation of networks for sharing these worthy contributions more widely, so as the influence change/improvement in broader policy and more widespread practice, for example. What opportunities exist for developing alliances that might result in collaborative endeavours which in turn may be a basis for enhancing the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

- There seems no doubt that for the ongoing support of teachers in curriculum decision-making, there needs to be a creative and critical approach to professional development. Important aspects of this support seem to relate to notions of cultural change within schools, the intensification of teachers' work and the ever-dwindling supply of available resources.

REPORTING THE ASYNCHRONOUS CONVERSATION – PART II

Participants were invited to comment on one another's initial comments (See Appendix A) and on the reflections, as outlined above. The following outline was provided to guide their further thinking and their follow-up comments.

How might the three parts of the emerging theoretical framework as presented in an earlier section of this paper contribute to a conceptual basis for underpinning efforts to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

> In relation to the first part (focussing on curriculum leadership) - for example, are the ways in which we describe curriculum leadership useful in seeking to understand the diversity across and within teaching/learning sites where teachers engage in curriculum decision-making?
>
> In relation to the second part (focussing on professional development) – for example, are the propositions a useful way of thinking about how we might shape professional development activities that will be supportive?
>
> In relation to the third part (focussing on strategies for professional development) - for example, how do Darling-Hammond's ideas help to take us forward from thinking about professional development to enacting it in ways which seek to see teachers working with

teachers and with teacher educators to form strategic and unified alliances in order to advocate for the enhancement of teachers' place and space (or profile) in curriculum decision-making?

How might the ideas outlined in the methodological framework (presented in an earlier section of this paper) help in taking us forward in our efforts to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

From the point of view of teachers

From the point of view of teacher educators

The follow-up comments are contained in Appendix B. Evelyn Sowell comments that she thinks we are on the right track about curriculum decision-making as a complex undertaking. Gayle Moller agrees, but cautions that there is an enormous gap between the current reality and what the theoretical framework recommends. Marianne Koo sees the need for commitment, willingness and openness on the part of teachers to collaborate and to share insights. She talks about a critical consciousness so that teachers' efforts reach beyond the classroom. Dawn Penney can see the notion of curriculum leadership as a shared phenomenon, but warns that we must emphasis the multiplicity of arenas within which curriculum leadership occurs. Pat Thomson critiques the use of geographical terms like place and space and raises the issue of how they are mediated, produced and reproduced. For her, teacher leadership is a product of both context and agency, which raises interesting questions about supporting teachers as they seek to engage in curriculum leadership.

In terms of professional development ideas and strategies, there was a marked emphasis in the follow-up comments on collaboration as well as a recognition of the increasing complexities associated with teachers' work. Pat Thomson takes says that our propositions should go beyond the levels of mindset and intellectual. She picks up on notions of bodies and emotions. She suggests the use of the concept of 'habitus' as basis for ongoing discussion/debate/research on how to grow teacher leadership 'habitus'.

These comments are only a snapshot of what the participants are saying. The fuller text of their comments in Appendix B serves the highlight the need for an ongoing conversation and the development of networks as well as unified and strategic alliances. For example, Gayle Moller stresses that we need to ask what is teacher leadership, while Dawn Penney advises that while we focus on the centrality of teachers, we should not ignore the centrality of students. Marianne Koo, meanwhile, speaks supportively of the use of Action Research to take our collaborative and critical efforts forwards.

REFLECTING ON THE ASYNCHRONOUS CONVERSATION – PART II

A review of the initial comments in Appendix A and of our reflections (Part I) above would be useful starting point as we pause to consider where the follow-up comments(See Appendix B) are leading the conversation.

The first part of the theoretical framework might indeed be a useful means to map the complexity and diversity of curriculum leadership territories. The notion of curriculum leadership as a shared phenomenon seems useful, but the first two points in "Reflecting on the asynchronous conversation – Part I" are very significant. It would also be wise to avoid simple binaries of micro and macro levels and consider the multiplicity (and complexity) of arenas within which curriculum leadership occurs.

The second part of the theoretical framework with its emphasis on propositions for professional development appears to be recognised as having an applicability in current contexts with their mix of the pragmatic, the complex and the ideal. The link between critical consciousness and spirited debate could be a useful way to proceed with efforts that are collaborative and reconstructive (and embedded in the embodied and emotional real worlds of teachers).

The third part of the framework relates to professional development strategies. Again, there is agreement in the follow-up comments, and the observation which Gayle Moller makes is salutory. She says asking teachers to take on curriculum leadership without sufficient opportunities for them to learn

is an unrealistic goal. And all of this within a multiplicity of diverse contexts (which Pat Thomson refers to as teacher leadership 'habitus')!

In terms of the methodological framework, follow-up comments from participants reiterate the importance of asking the question, what is curriculum leadership in ways that are centred upon teachers and their perspectives; collaborative; and reconstructive via the use of networks and alliances which are both unified and strategic. Have we begun, then, to build, through this initial reconnaissance, a platform for ongoing collaborative critique, action, reflection and reconstruction?

REFLECTING ON THE PROCESS USED TO DEVELOP THIS PAPER

So what might be the propositions, theoretical abstractions and informed actions concerning the view we presented at the outset about the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making? How might the profile of teachers be enhanced through professional development? What can we do together in terms of curriculum work; professional development which supports that work; and political advocacy which gives authentic recognition to the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

It would be counter to the spirit of the process which we have used to develop this paper to make statements about propositions, theoretical abstractions and informed actions. Such statements, we believe, would be our interpretations; and as such they would be premature and improperly informed. The closest we have dared come to making such statements is contained in our Part I and Part II reflections above.

Let's take a few moments to reflect upon the process; and then to identify where the questions immediately above might fit. The process has been an example of critical collaborative action research, with the integration of what we have referred to as an hermeneutic spiral.

In terms of Action Research, we have seen dissemination and extension of ideas from earlier work as appropriate next action steps. Among these next steps, has been the process used to develop this paper. In Action Research terms, it has been a reconnaissance whereby the usefulness of our ideas has been opened to the scrutiny of teacher educator colleagues (all of whom work collaboratively with teachers) in four cultural contexts. These colleagues have become a critical friend network Their scrutiny of our ideas has provided the hermeneutic spiral whereby our work (albeit critically-informed) has been taken beyond the local and been subjected to critique by others in other contexts around the world. The reflections provided by both our colleagues and ourselves have provided a platform for sharing at the AERA Annual meeting and for extending the critical friend network to include teachers directly. Ongoing actions will be negotiated, and what actions various members of the network decide upon might be quite diverse. For example, what might teachers do to advocate for an authentic recognition of the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making within their immediate work contexts? Or, what might teacher educators do, working in collaboration with teachers, to enhance the profile of teachers through a range of professional development approaches and activities? Or, how might teachers and teacher educators (and maybe other stakeholders) develop a lifeworld perspective of teachers' curriculum work and how that might best be supported?

One way to proceed is to take the unfinished summary which follows as a platform for negotiating an agenda both to continue the conversation and to take collaborative action(s). We invite YOU to complete the last two sections of this summary.

AN UNFINISHED SUMMARY OF THE PAPER

- Our theoretical and methodological frameworks (emerging from our earlier work) – See pages 4-9.
- Our decision to disseminate ideas and to open them to scrutiny (one of our next action steps) –See page 9.
- Our formation of a small critical friend network (the beginnings of an hermeneutic spiral to take our work beyond the local) – See page 9.
- The reconnaissance (via the critical friend network involving participants' and our reflections) – See pages 9-11.
- A reflection on the process that led to the development of this paper – See pages 11 & 12.
- Emerging questions which appear worthwhile as the subject for a continuing conversation with an expanded critical friend network:

    1. *So what might be the propositions, theoretical abstractions and informed actions be concerning the view we presented at the outset about the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making?*
    2. *How might the profile of teachers be enhanced through professional development?*
    3. *What can we do together in terms of curriculum work; professional development which supports that work; and political advocacy which gives authentic recognition to the centrality of teachers in curriculum decision-making?*

YOUR REFLECTIONS AND RECONSTRUCTIONS (via your attendance at the paper presentation and your subsequent reading of the paper)

YOUR SUGGESTIONS REGARDING CONCEPTIONS ABOUT:

The place of and space for teachers in curriculum decision-making

Teacher professional development which supports and sustains teachers in curriculum decision-making

Practical ways to proceed with both the conversation and action(s) (eg ways to extend the critical friend networks and to identify possible foci for action).

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INVITING YOU TO JOIN THE CONVERSATION

So in what ways do the ideas which we have shared in this paper present a critical challenge to education systems? The challenge is focussed on matching the rhetoric about the place of teachers in curriculum decision-making with curriculum change and professional development practices (which seek to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making in ways that recognise their legitimate place in, and create authentic space(s) for their engagement in curriculum leadership)?

How might we as teachers and teacher educators be a part of confronting education systems with such a challenge?

The frameworks which we have presented; and the asynchronous electronic interchanges which have been reported and reflected upon are simply the beginning of an ongoing conversation. It is a conversation which, we hope, will continue and form the basis of our finding a critical, collaborative and reconstructive voice to confront whoever it is with the challenge as well as a sense of empowerment to reconstruct the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making.

We invite you to complete Appendix C and leave it with us, so that we can at least continue the conversation.

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APPENDIX A
Initial comments from participants
(NOTE: APART FROM MINOR EDITING RE LAYOUT, THE COMMENTS ARE PRESENTED AS FORWARDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS)

PERCEPTIONS OF CURRICULUM-DECISION MAKING IN TWO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SETTINGS

Evelyn J. Sowell
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My conversations with elementary teachers suggest that they hold different views of curriculum decision making. These teachers work in two different urban school districts in Phoenix, Arizona, USA where the prevailing political-social philosophy is conservative. Arizona has curriculum standards in reading-language arts, mathematics, and other subject matter areas. In the near future student performance of these standards will be assessed through the Arizona Instruments to Measure Standards (AIMS) at elementary, middle/junior high and senior high school levels. Under current law students must "pass" the AIMS to graduate from high school. Most school *districts* have modified these curriculum standards slightly and expect teachers to gear instruction toward these standards.

The two groups of teachers work in different school districts where the majority of children come from impoverished social and economic backgrounds and speak limited or no English. Both school principals select the teachers in their respective buildings. The principals and teachers appear to share a common philosophy regarding curriculum and its delivery in the schools. As support, the turnover rate among teachers on these two faculties is very low, suggesting that teachers are relatively well satisfied with their assignments and that principals find the teachers' performances satisfactory.

Despite the common elements in terms of location and circumstances, the teachers and principals appear to view their PLACES in curriculum decision making differently in the two schools. This paper reports anecdotal evidence in support of these statements.

School A

The teachers and principal in School A can be described as following the usual work pattern in many schools in Arizona. That is, students receive instruction in graded, self-contained classrooms where one teacher provides all the instruction for twenty or more children of a particular age. A few classrooms, however, are called transitional grades, meaning that children have not met all the requirements but are moving as a group to the next level, but not necessarily to the next grade.

These teachers work together by grade levels to plan curriculum for their particular students based on the district curriculum, which details the abilities that will be assessed at each level. Under their principal's leadership, these teachers are making strong attempts to help students be successful, particularly in language literacy and mathematics. They devote 90 minutes to language literacy and 60 minutes to mathematics instruction every day.

That these teachers are dedicated to helping students learn is evident by their conversations. A kindergarten teacher with more than 25 years' experience lamented that her job becomes more difficult each year because the gap is increasing between district curriculum expectations and the students' abilities to perform. An experienced third grade teacher described having students with abilities ranging from first grade through fourth grade in her classroom. She was unable to introduce some mathematics topics to students whose backgrounds were radically deficient, but other students were ready to move ahead. Both teachers expressed concern that they were unable to help all students meet the expectations of their grade levels.

I specifically asked the seven teachers whether they worked on curriculum matters with anyone other than grade level colleagues. Their uniform preference was not to do so because they did not have time. Occasionally one of their members is "drafted" for district service. The group said this gave them adequate input into district level curriculum matters.

In particular this group of teachers and the principal acknowledge the importance of their students' test performances. Currently, district wide assessments and standardized norm referenced achievement examinations are given in third grade every spring. The upcoming AIMS will be an additional test.

School S

The teachers and principal in School S follow some, but not all of the usual work patterns. The teachers teach children in multi-age classrooms and have the same children for two or three consecutive years.

The teachers like having students for long periods because they can work closely with the children and their parents/guardians. Obviously the decision to organize instruction this way is a joint decision between teachers and principal.

The teachers described their curriculum decision-making processes in some detail. Most teachers encourage their students to suggest curriculum topics, in the belief that this practice encourages student interest in classroom activities. Curriculum is considered as an integrated entity in which subject matter distinctions blur. As one teacher described the processes: "Each child brings so much to the classroom...we view school as the place where you learn about your world." Learning about the world drives curriculum development. During one school year students in grades 4-6 designed and maintained a community garden. One teacher described the project as follows:

> We did the community garden as a life science project....We had to decide where to build the garden, so we found the best location in the school. We determined the fertility and the composition of the soil--and this was where we learned a lot of terms. The students worked in groups of four or five with butcher paper to design the garden....then presented their plans to the class. How do we irrigate? How will we harvest? Plant? What plants? What will grow? This is part of knowing the children.

As this excerpt shows, reading-language arts and mathematics are combined within other subject matter areas. However, the teachers do use objectives prescribed by the state standards.

Teachers make heavy use of community resources in curriculum delivery. For example, senior citizens living in a retirement community relate the oral history of the school community to young children who walk to their nearby retirement home to interact with the surrogate grandparents. The groups also lunch together once a week at the school cafeteria where the conversations continue.

These teachers exhibited relaxed attitudes toward district and state assessments. These assessments obviously do not drive their curriculum, but are merely exercises required by outsiders in which students and teachers must participate.

Concluding Comments

These brief comments show that teachers and principals may exhibit different curriculum decision-making strategies. One tentative explanation is that teacher-principal values and beliefs about curriculum sources and purposes of education give rise to differences in perceptions of their professional leadership roles. Additional data are needed to support this explanation.

Illusionary freedom ?
Dr. Dawn Penney
School of Physical Education, Sport and Leisure,
De Montfort University, UK.
Contribution to the AERA presentation on Curriculum Leadership; Macpherson and Brooker

Firstly it seems appropriate to place the comments that follow in context, and specifically, explain the research from which my comments emerge. In addressing the issues relating to curriculum leadership, and in particular teachers' place(s) and space (s) in this, I draw upon almost a decade of research concerned with policy and curriculum development in physical education. From the UK perspective, I draw upon research 1990-1995 that has centred upon the development, implementation and revision of the National Curriculum for Physical Education in England and Wales, that included investigation of the role of central and local government sites and schools. In addition, my comments relating to the situation in the UK are informed by my current research addressing the review and revision of the National Curriculum. These experiences have then been accompanied by two years of research in Australia, during which I was involved in a number of curriculum evaluation and development projects, that provided important new and contrasting insights into the potential roles of teachers in policy and curriculum development.

In discussing the role of teachers in curriculum development, and specifically their potential leadership in and of this process, I find myself engaging with what seems an ongoing tension. On the one hand I

retain a view that there is very real potential for teachers to instigate and direct innovative curriculum developments in schools, and have seen instances of it. On the other, and invariably more dominant, is a view of teachers as marginal figures in contemporary curriculum development; excluded and or marginalised in developments driven and directed by central government, and ultimately being offered 'flexibility' to implement or develop other people's agendas in contexts that similarly, reflect those agendas. Thus, the view I have increasingly come to is one of policy / curriculum texts and contemporary institutional contexts setting a complex mix of "frames", within which teachers do have 'freedom' and 'flexibility' in implementation, but it is very limited and directed in its nature. In short, there is limited scope for deviation from a clearly (but in many respects very subtly) prescribed direction for developments. Elsewhere I have tried to capture both the strength of influence and the complexity/subtlety of the process by emphasising that the key characteristic about the policy and curriculum development process in England and Wales is perhaps not that the government is dictating the play, but rather that it has re-shaped the ground while simultaneously redefining the game (see Penney, 1994; Evans, Davies & Penney, 1994; Penney & Evans, 1997; 1999). In this context, I see very little scope for any "authentic inclusion" of teachers in curriculum leadership. The strength of the surrounding frames seems such that all notions of authenticity disappear.

In now turning attention to the specific themes of teachers' place, readiness and potential to engage in curriculum leadership, particular characteristics (and constraints) of the specific context that I am focusing upon; policy and curriculum development in England; hopefully become clearer.

The **place** of teachers in curriculum development...
Certainly in relation to the development of national texts that detail the statutory framework for physical education curricula in all state (government funded) schools in England, teachers are arguably positioned very much at the margins. At this level the policy process centres upon and seems controlled/constrained by curriculum authorities (quangos) developing 'new' curriculum requirements / frameworks within very short timelines and with arguably minimalist consultation with teachers. The situation is such that few teachers have any insights into the review of the National Curriculum that is currently underway, with new documentation due to arrive in schools in January 2000 for implementation in September 2000. The process reflects and reinforces a rigid division between policy 'making' and 'implementation', and portrays and positions teachers as the 'deliverers' of knowledge defined by others. That said, teachers are identified as central to 'implementation', and the statutory requirements are such that there are many key decisions relating to curriculum content and design to be determined at school and departmental 'levels'. There is clear "flexibility", albeit within a specific frame, for curricula to take various forms and in so doing, potentially (see below) emphasise different values and interests to those privileged by the centrally determined framework and requirements (see Penney & Evans 1999; Harris & Penney, 1997). However, the emphasis of this potential and centrality has to be balanced with critical reflection upon exactly what teachers are placed at the centre of ?... both the central government texts, and the contemporary contexts of schools need to be acknowledged as powerful frames to thinking and action on the part of teachers (Penny,1994; Penney & Evans 1997; 1999). This is directly reflected in the readiness and potential of teachers to have 'authentic inclusion' in curriculum leadership.

Readiness....
Feeling excluded from policy/curriculum development at the level of central government, devalued as a profession, working in conditions of seemingly ever increasing and constantly changing expectations, and in particular demands for 'accountability' and evidence of achievement in teaching and learning, many teachers are exhausted, disillusioned and simply concerned to do their best in difficult conditions to deliver what they regard as a good educational experience to pupils while simultaneously striving to meet the demands in relation to 'standards'. These have yet to be fully articulated in the context of physical education, but the broader context has had and is having a critical influence in 'implementation' and ongoing 'development' of the National Curriculum. Facing a seemingly non-stop stream of government led 'reforms', to a degree teachers have created their own stability by accommodating new requirements within what are in important respects unchanged curricula. The flexibility of the statutory requirements has facilitated and legitimated such as response, and furthermore, in an apparent attempt to play down new demands, such a response has often been identified by the central government authorities as entirely possible. Thus, while we may claim the potential for innovative development, we have seen that in important respects, the outcome of 'flexibility' can be the maintenance of status quo (Penney, 1994; Penney & Evans, 1997; 1999). Individual schools and teachers can be regarded as taking the National Curriculum in individualistic

directions, but I certainly question the degree to which this outcome reflects any 'authentic inclusion' in the curriculum development process; and the degree to which the term 'development' is appropriate in many instances.

Potential ...

In discussing the potential for such inclusion, I face a dilemma as to whether the potential remains real or whether the situation is such that we have moved to a point where it is illusionary. There are many sources of pressures to direct teachers towards a particular reading of, and response to the National Curriculum for Physical Education. Throughout the development, there has been a critical absence of discussion of alternative readings and responses that would give rise to curricula that had a distinctly 'new look' and emphases. There are pressures within schools, from elsewhere in the education system, and externally (media and parents) to succeed according to the criteria and in the game that the government has defined for education. To pursue alternative agendas is a risk few are willing or able to contemplate (Penney 1994; Penney & Evans 1997; 1999). Again therefore, I question the notion of 'authenticity' of leadership in such contexts. To expand on potential, other critical considerations are the decline in advisory support for teachers that has accompanied the development of the National Curriculum (see Evans & Penney 1994, Penney & Evans, 1999) and perhaps even more crucial, the reduced 'space for action' (or contestation of the dominant agendas) in training institutions. The government's move to tighten its hold / control over this arena is surely the most significant threat to possibilities of fostering creative thinking and authentic leadership amongst future teachers (see Evans, Davies & Penney 1996).

To conclude....

As noted on several previous occasions, we can be regarded as painting a perhaps depressing and too deterministic picture that denies teachers all or any agency. Clearly this is not the case. Teachers remain central to developments in their schools. What we have increasingly come to question, however, is the degree to which their actions can be seen as reflecting agency, given that the responses are in contexts over which they have seemingly little control and directed to demands and expectations that similarly have been imposed rather than collaboratively developed (see Evans, Davies & Penney 1994; Penney & Evans, 1999).

There are some teachers with the vision and interest to explore the unexplored potential inherent in the National Curriculum for Physical Education. However, to do so, they need support from various sources, within and beyond their school. Collaborative research (that may be linked to higher degrees) is in my view, one of the key ways in which this potential can be both explored and realised. However, there are few teachers in a position to be able to take on such an endeavor, and changes also need to be made in many universities to facilitate more opportunities that acknowledge and represent a conscious response to the situations and interests of teachers.

..... Most teachers seem placed at the margins and the spaces for 'authentic inclusion' in leadership seem few and far between. Furthermore, the position and status of 'technician' seems increasingly accepted / desired. For many teachers, having increasingly prescribed routes by which to achieve the desired standards may offer welcome relief from the pressures they feel.

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The Place, Readiness and Potential with respect to the involvement of teachers in curriculum decision-making in a cultural context (Hong Kong)
Marianne Koo

Hong Kong is undergoing education reform which has impacts on the systems from early childhood to tertiary education. The following viewpoints are encapsulated within the context of contemporary curriculum innovations like the TOC, SBCPS, and the General Studies and which highlight the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making to practitioners for critical reflections and reconstruction of dynamism of theory, practice, policy and research.

The Place for the involvement of teachers in curriculum decision-making

The government has provided opportunities to get the front-line teachers involved in the curriculum reform (CDI/TOC/2(XVII), 16Dec98; Cir. Memo. No. 43/99, 13Jan99; Cir. Memo. No. 27/99, 20Jan99). Whilst having 'support and encouragement' from the central agencies, teachers are situated in a sea of changes which create tensions and dilemmas toward reconstruction of their curriculum work (Koo, 1999a). It seems that teachers can exercise their professional autonomy on curriculum decision-making which enhances the effectiveness of learning and teaching during the implemention of the TOC, SBCPS and the General Studies. The paradox is that teachers are deprofessionalised, deskilled and devalued as 'para-professionals' for implementing the imposed policies that their tensions and dilemmas of unblocking the constraints at classroom, school and system levels have not been resolved. The question is: **Who are central to make curriculum decisions with respect to the effectiveness of learning and teaching as well as ensuring quality of education?**

The Readiness for the involvement of teachers in curriculum decision-making

Some teachers are 'used to' rhetoric of educational policy initiatives that have 'window-dressed' effects when implemented at school and classroom levels from an outside-in. Other teachers would reconstruct these imposed changes of teacher curriculum decision-making as their **challenges and chances by praxis**. It is a matter of **empowering** the teachers to see their place as central in making curriculum decisions. I am arguing that this sense of empowerment should be recultured from an inside-out perspective and from a collaborative force to move the teaching profession forward.

The Potential for the involvement of teachers in curriculum decision-making

It has two dimensions with respect to the classroom, school and system levels: **empowerment and teacher professional development.** They are mutually inclusive. These ideas are evolving and interacting upon the findings of a research which are being undertaken within a context of curriculum change in Hong Kong (Koo, 1999d).

Dimensions Levels	Classroom	School	System
Empowerment	**Curriculum leadership:** ③ Reconstruct the dynamic relationship of knowledge and action, theory and practice ③ Involvement of parents in making curriculum decisions while emphasising the central role of teachers in CDM	③ Curriculum leadership ③ Shared values and decision-making power by restructuring or transforming schools ③ Collaborative teamwork with colleagues and curriculum consultants ③ Collaborative Action Research with university researchers for ongoing reconstruction of curriculum work	③ Curriculum leadership ③ Teachers' voice and grounded research ③ Professional governing body (e g. Teaching Council) ③ Reconceptualisa-tion of theory, practice, policy and research

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Teacher Professional Development (Space for curriculum leadership)	Teacher professional development : ③ Build-in Professional learning ③ Dynamic curriculum and teaching ③ Partnership and collaboration	Teacher professional development: ③ Principal professional development ③ School-based management ③ School-based curriculum ③ School-based professional development ③ Retiming ③ Reculturing ③ Restructuring	Teacher professional development: ③ Advanced teacher qualifications for pre-service courses (post-degree plus professional teacher education) ③ Sustaining in-service teacher education which should be context-specific ③ Involvement in shaping educational policies ③ Introduction of 'life-long learning'

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Enhancing the Profile of Teachers in Curriculum Decision-Making:
Some International Perspectives
AERA 1999, Montreal
Perspective from the Southeastern United States
Gayle Moller

School improvement in the USA evolved from the late 1980's to the present. Initially, school improvement planning focused on non-teaching goals such as increased communication with parents which may be unrelated to teaching and learning. Presently, most schools are concerned with teaching and learning out of necessity because they are facing public accountability of their efforts through student assessment measures developed by the state departments of education in response to the demands of their state legislatures.

Place
Although the 50 states in the USA may differ, the three states, Florida, Kentucky, and North Carolina, informing this perspective are remarkably alike. The content of the assessed curriculum is primarily reading, writing, and mathematics. Kentucky, in this process longer, has added other areas of assessment, even the Arts and Humanities ' Students at identified grade levels (i.e. fourth grade, eighth grade) are tested annually and the outcomes of these tests may result in an identification of the school's performance through a label, such as School of Distinction. Extrinsic, as well as Jintrinsic, rewards become reminders that the test scores are the primary measures of the school's success, regardless of the teachers' expectations for students.

A middle school in North Carolina is working to build collegial communities of teachers focused on reading comprehension of their students. This school is successful according to the state's measures, but the teachers recognize the state standards are lower than their expectations for their students. Still each teacher in this school worries about the outcomes of the state assessments and the pressure is more intense in the language arts and mathematics classes in the grade that is assessed. Similar pressures are evident in Florida and Kentucky.

These expectations of the states press teachers into paying attentions to state-designed curriculum frameworks, which are in some cases prescriptive. Selected teacher leaders were invited to assist in developing the frameworks. School districts, with the help of selected teacher leaders, align curriculum, and textbooks are purchased based on their support of the curriculum that will be assessed by the state. Pacing guides outlining content to be covered during a certain period of time become the lesson plans of many teachers. Following the "recipe" is easier than trying to develop a coherent, creative curriculum for a diverse group of students. Imagine the complexity of designing curriculum to ensure the state curriculum framework is "covered" within the limited teacher planning time allocated during the day, usually no more than sixty minutes.

Readiness

Teachers have gone through stages as school improvement and accountability evolved. The first stage was to identify school goals not closely related to the classroom. Humorous reflections among educators discussing early school improvement plans remind them of goals such as assigning parking spaces or the use of the copy machine. Then teachers in the planning process began to recognize the importance of an instructional focus as long as it did not enter the individual teacher's classroom. This stage included goals to restructure the school, such as block scheduling or common planning times. The outcomes were ambiguous descriptions of what the student will learn reading, writing, and mathematics all within one year.

Next, when the assessment measures were a reality and both teacher and school performance were open to examination, the interest turned to how to help the students take the test. Learning, how to handle the technical function of test taking plus a strong emphasis on content directly measured by the assessment became the curriculum for many teachers.

Throughout this evolution there emerged a growing number of teacher leaders, both formal and informal leaders, who understood that teaching and learning is more than the state's assessment. Did it take a fearful approach in the form of accountability assessment to move the teachers' conversations in this direction, or were these teachers always concerned about how students learn and their own teaching"? Regardless of the origin, more teachers are talking with each other about the connection between their teaching and their students' learning.

The "doom and gloom" of accountability is giving way in a few isolated contexts to teacher leadership in designing original curriculum in collaboration with peers who reflect on student work and their teaching practices using an action research model. Recognizing the political agenda that must be attended to, these teachers incorporate the basic content assessed by their states into a thematic curriculum to match their students' unique needs. This is teacher leadership in the truest sense. These teacher leaders then influence colleagues in their schools and in other school districts regionally and nationally. Unfortunately, this leadership rarely moves beyond the school's walls into the schools within the same school district, unless there is central office leadership to facilitate building networks of communication for sharing best practices.

Potential

In the USA the university, central office, school leadership, classroom teachers, students, parents and community are in "parallel play" just as pre-school children play in sandboxes and rarely interact with each other. Conversations float back and forth within the individual contexts and there are actual and espoused attempts to link th6 se major stakeholders in authentic conversations, but in reality they each work separately with infrequent relevant interaction related to improved teaching and learning.

The potential for teacher leadership in curriculum' decision making is also evolving. Teachers are more frequently involved in curriculum reform efforts that engage their leadership in the implementation of the model (e.g. Coalition of Essential Schools). Enlightened principals recognize that a capital investment in teacher leadership will result in synergy leading to increased school

improvement. Professional development funding, directed primarily to the school site, pushed teachers to collaboratively make decisions on how to spend the resources to meet the school improvement goals.

The next stage is to involve all teachers as leaders within their classrooms, in their school's planning process, and outside the school site at the district, regional, state, and national level. Teachers are emerging to accept the challenge of leadership, but we cannot be satisfied with the small percentage who see this as their role. Most teachers are reluctant to call themselves leaders, even if they are actively leading at all levels of influence. The stigma of "leader" denotes "a boss" and reflects the patriarchal model of education. There is much work to be done within the culture of schooling to encourage teachers to see themselves as able and empowered to make curriculum decisions when, in fact, they must be making these decisions- The other stakeholders in their contexts do not live with the students on a day-to-day basis, so they can only be servant leaders and co-learners with the teacher leaders.

Spaces and places for teachers to develop/exercise leadership. Implications for teacher education (preservice and inservice). Response to Ian Macpherson, Tania Aspland, Ross Brooker and Bob Elliott.

Pat Thomson

(These comments are based on doctoral research, conversations and an analysis of a local activist email list. In particular, respect due to Nigel Howard, whose ideas and mine are so mutually intertwined I find it hard to begin to separate them.)

As you suggest in your paper, all spaces and places are not the same.

One of the most pressing issues for me and other colleagues concerns the education of teachers who will and already do work in disadvantaged schools. This has always been problematic and is increasingly so, some enthusiastic and skilled new and old teachers notwithstanding.

Consider just some of the ways in which the general teaching space has changed in this state:

- Reductions in funding have meant less time is available to support collaborative work among staff
- Reductions in support staff have meant more time is taken by teachers on clerical tasks
- New curriculum requirements involve more monitoring , documenting and record keeping

In addition, the emphasis on the teachers' place as one of implementation of policies, rather than as initiator of new practices and pedagogical knowledges, gives no permission for teachers to do more than 'tinker' within the boxes of the curriculum 'grids' (Thomson, 1999 in press).

Disadvantaged schools

Disadvantaged schools are positioned in particular ways.

Many South Australian disadvantaged schools are located in regions where there is worsening structural unemployment, and diminishing public services such as health, transport and housing. Consequently they are dealing with more families under pressure. Disadvantaged schools have always had less time than their more privileged counterparts to engage in pedagogical reform, because of the sheer volume of welfare and social order demands on them, but this is set of unavoidable demands is escalating. In South Australia, which has the second highest unemployment rates in the country and the second lowest retention rates, where we are facing our fifteenth consecutive round of education budget cuts and where industrial relations are at an all time level of hostility, the overall mood in schools is besieged. That so many are still able to maintain relatively good morale and positive reform agendas is a tribute to their leaders (and by that I mean administrators and teachers, and in some cases parents).

Disadvantaged schools in this state have always had a range of staff, some of whom are highly enthusiastic and committed to reforming their practices, and others who are hostile. There has never been much conversation about a systematic way to grow new teachers for disadvantaged schools (ie implications for preservice) but there was, through the Disadvantaged Schools Program, a lot of support for changing teacher practices. The DSP mandate was that the teachers' place was to make a difference. This created spaces for teachers to take risks, to work together in new ways and to make new connection with students and parents.

Now that the DSP has been abolished and replaced by the Commonwealth Literacy Program, teachers in disadvantaged schools are placed in an unenviable position. The responsibility for student failure in mandated basic skills testing is sheeted home to the failures of the DSP and to poor teaching. The space for teachers' work is discursively confined to literacy and/or literacy associated activities, vocational education, civics and numeracy - the new basics - and the teachers' place is to receive and then enact new pedagogical techniques.

My research suggests that this is variously resisted, simulated, emulated and adopted in disadvantaged schools, most of whom are still maintaining, with considerable difficulty, teacher generated reform activities. There is a grieving for the old networks, supported research and positive regard from the wider system, combined with fear of the consequences of fragmentation, isolation, competition and 'white flight', as 'shopping around' takes greater hold in the parent community. School initiated clusters have been damaged by the growing competition among schools and have also become the site of management and peer surveillance (Thomson, 1999, under examination).

As an example that teacher reform energies have not died, I will briefly describe one project being undertaken in one school, in cooperation with the University of South Australia.

Growing teachers for disadvantaged schools

Most teachers are by definition successes in the schools system. While they may be critical of it, they nevertheless have developed the 'habitus', the 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu, 1990), that is required to 'do school'(Hill, Comber, Louden, Reid, & Rivalland, 1998). Moreover most of those undertaking preservice teacher education courses are, by virtue of probabilities, more likely to have come from schools that were not disadvantaged.

Disadvantaged schools might then be seen as 'foreign territory' to the vast majority of student teachers. Many of them have little understanding of disadvantaged schools, and even less of the sociological debates around the construction of privilege and the relations of inequality, and the ways in which schools are implicated. (The diminution of this kind of debate in policy circles and its replacement with effective schools approaches that seek to deny context and put in its place dubious notions of value adding makes this comment also apt for the wider profession). Many of them have been influenced by the routine 'othering' of particular locations and schools and are either afraid of the students found in those places, or are moved by notions of charity.

One disadvantaged school in the northern suburbs of Adelaide is looking at how it might be possible to simultaneously develop a network of information flows between the university and its students (many of whom do not see this as a viable option) and also provide experiences for students teachers that will show them another picture of disadvantaged schools - one where everyday life is no picnic, but one which presents enormous possibilities for professional growth and the development of leadership.

The school plans to build on two, now defunct, schemes that operated between six northern suburbs high schools and the now closed Salisbury campus of the University of South Australia (UNISA). In one scheme, student teachers in a graduate diploma were allocated to the staffs of the schools, together with a lecturer, and took part in the life of the school throughout the year - the culmination of their course was to run 'University High school' with Year 9 students from all of the schools. The second scheme involved university students who were educated in northern suburbs schools working as paid tutors for secondary students in those schools who were interested in the possibility of university study.

The current project is supported by a teacher, herself a local person who went to university as a mature age student having been inspired by involvement with a students at risk project in another neighbouring school, and a school administrator (not the principal) who was responsible for that community project in the other school as a teacher.

The school has identified a number of students, those considered to be needing intervention to enable them to stay at school but whose academic progress is not too damaged to enable them to join in regular classes. These young people are taken out of mainstream classes for some of the time and engaged in a range of community service projects in addition to many discussions about life, the universe and the organisation of society. The school proposes to link a couple of university students with a small group of four to five school students on a mentor basis, as well as providing school based teaching for the preservice students about educational disadvantage. The aim is to break down the

"apprentice" model of learning to be a teacher and to develop a collaborative model between the school and university.

In the first practicum the University students will work collaboratively with secondary students and community workers on a community development project developed by the school staff members. In the second practicum the preservice students will develop and teach a community development project in a block at the University, for example, developing a website for antiracist group. In the words of the school administrator, "The idea is to place the students in relation to our students and their community."

The school administrator responsible for the project hopes that this will

- change not just the attitudes of the university students, but also their 'habitus', as they live what it feels like to work with 'these kids'
- put the school students in a place where they begin to see themselves as not necessarily positioned 'outside' and as 'other', as having some reason to stay at school and even considering high education for themselves at some point in their lives
- demonstrate to other staff members other ways of working with marginalised students
- show the university that there is some potential in the notion of a systematic approach to growing teachers for disadvantaged schools

This is one example of a teacher taking advantage of his 'place' as an administrator with a mandate to work in the 'space' of at risk students, working collaboratively with another teacher to enable her to grow as a leader, and working across sectors on an ongoing and vexed question.

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APPENDIX B

Follow-up comments from participants

(NOTE: APART FROM MINOR EDITING RE LAYOUT, THE COMMENTS ARE PRESENTED AS FORWARDED BY THE PARTICIPANTS)

FROM GAYLE MOLLER

1. How might the three parts of the emerging theoretical framework as outlined above contribute to a conceptual basis for underpinning efforts to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

There is an enormous gap between the current status of teachers in curriculum leadership and what the theoretical framework recommends. The few, isolated instances of teacher leadership that reflect this model are tenuous at best. The arrival of a new principal, a policy mandate, or a change in relationships at the school may influence a teacher leader to retreat from curriculum leadership to isolation within the classroom. We hoped that building the capacity of a critical mass of teacher leaders to be curriculum decision makers would ameliorate these factors, but this does not seem to protect the institutionalization of teacher leadership.

The framework can contribute to opening conversation about the role of teachers in curriculum decision making. The actualization of the framework is founded in our beliefs about why people do their work. If we trust teachers to do their best in striving to improve teaching and learning, then the framework makes sense. If we believe that teachers need to be monitored, then a prescriptive, technician role is the alternative.

2. In relation to the first part (focusing on curriculum leadership) - for example, are the ways in which we describe curriculum leadership useful in seeking to understand the diversity across and within teaching/learning sites where teachers engage in curriculum decision-making?

Yes, the model can be applicable across sites. This week I worked with one of the best principals I have known. As she presented her ideas to a group of school leaders, she shared how the professional development model she used was the same in a high socioeconomic status middle school, a disadvantaged, inner-city high school, and, presently, in a university laboratory school.

3. In relation to the second part (focusing on professional development) - for example, are the propositions a useful way of thinking about how we might shape professional development activities that will be supportive?

The professional development (PD) propositions match my observations. I just completed a project with a group of school districts who wanted to evaluate the outcomes of professional development. As I searched the literature, talked to colleagues across the USA, and reflected on my experiences these propositions are the components that emerged. The only difference was that, at least in the USA, there are power relationships between the central office, the school leadership, and classroom leadership. Attention must be paid to the collaboration between those three groups. None of them can work in isolation and succeed in improving teaching and learning for all students. So the model they will use incorporates leadership responsibility and accountability at all three levels.

4. In relation to the third part (focusing on strategies for professional development) - for example, how do Darling-Hammond's ideas help to take us forward from thinking about professional development to enacting it in ways which seek to see teachers working with teachers and with teacher educators to form strategic and unified alliances in order to advocate for the enhancement of teachers' place and space (or profile) in curriculum decision-making?

I believe that Linda Darling-Hammond's recent work with the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future will substantively impact our thinking about teacher learning. Gary Sykes, from Michigan State University and a co-author with Darling-Hammond, recently (3/2/99) shared the three areas we must focus on for teacher learning:

1. teacher knowledge base of the content (subject)
2. teacher knowledge of content (subject)-specific pedagogy
3. teacher knowledge of how students learn the specific content (subject)

The tougher standards (national and state) are demanding that we teach at a higher level than many of our teachers experienced in their own schooling. To ask teachers to take on curriculum decision making or leadership without sufficient opportunities to learn themselves seems an unrealistic goal. In addition, teachers are asked to teach a more diverse student population than they encountered upon

entering the profession. Darling-Hammond's plea for teachers' "right to learn" is exasperated by these factors.

5. How might the ideas outlined in the methodological framework above help in taking us forward in our efforts to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

From the point of view of teachers

From the point of view of teacher educators

The top-down approaches among the five sites described in your paper tell us that teachers are not trusted to take on curriculum leadership. In fairness, many policymakers cannot understand the concept of teacher leadership beyond the role of an assigned task. The conversations need to start at this level. What is teacher leadership? How do you recognize formal and informal leadership? Why should we engage teachers in making decisions about how and what their students should learn? Using your theoretical framework, the conversation can begin. In fact, this should be a continuing conversation among your respondents.

FROM EVELYN SOWELL

I am sorry that my schedule did not allow me to respond to your request about your methodological framework in any detail. I believe that you and your colleagues are on the right track about curriculum decision making as a complex undertaking. I wish you well as you continue to develop your ideas. Thank you for the opportunity to consider them.

FROM MARIANNE KOO

How might the three parts of the emerging theoretical framework as outlined above contribute to a conceptual basis for underpinning efforts to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

The ways by which the three parts of the emerging theoretical framework as proposed (Macpherson, Brooker, Aspland, Elliott, 1999) contribute to a conceptual basis for underpinning efforts to enhance the profile for teachers in curriculum decision-making are first, to reculture a strong sense of professional **commitment** of teachers and principals to change and ongoing improvement of curriculum practices which have been identified as problematic. Practitioners should be empowered from an inside-out perspective to recognise change and improvement as their relative responsibility in enhancing the effectiveness of teaching and learning, for example professional development and life-long learning.

Second, to increase the **willingness** and widen the **openness** of practitioners to share and collaborate with other stakeholders in which personal factors and organisational structures have dominant influences on the improvement and reconstruction of the present scenario. Such sharing and collaboration amongst colleagues may create conflicts of ideas or problems of interpersonal relationships. However, these conflicts may also lead to advancement both intellectually and practically if participants treasure **conflicts in harmony**.

Third, to increase **critical consciousness** of broader contexts which are embedded with social, cultural, economic and political changes could facilitate teachers in curriculum leadership irrespective of the rank in the school they are positioned. It is argued (Koo, 1999d) that the empowerment of teachers and principals within the notion of teacher curriculum decision-making (or curriculum leadership) should go beyond personal commitment within the classroom context in order to enable **cultural change** about their involvement and their voices to be heard in making policies at school and system levels.

Reflections

*Whether the notions of place and space of teachers in curriculum leadership are **a pipe dream** or **a likely reality** are determined (or governed) by the values and beliefs of the people who involved. These values and beliefs to make meanings on what deserved to change are neither static nor unchangeable (for example, Dewey, Heschel). If we position ourselves as 'outsiders' of or merely observers to*

curriculum change, if we believe there will be limited hope to change the present, if we keep on dreaming of what we have been dreaming about, it would remain as a pipe dream out there.

If we make actions on the dream, if we participate to put the dream into a reality, if we are involved and committed to transform the present into the future, the dream is neither a null concept nor an empty talk, it is and will be a lived reality! What matters is whether we have a dream and whether we want the dream to become a lived reality that we own and treasure. This is surely not a distorted reality as regarded by some people who remain the dream as a dream. People can have authentic inclusion by making meanings of the reality they construct but not granted!

The question is whether we value and treasure about ***Knowledge and Action together (□□□□), Diversity in Unity, Conflicts in Harmony, Regionalisation in Globalisation*** *(Koo, 1999d).*

In relation to the first part (focussing on curriculum leadership) – for example, are, the ways in which we describe curriculum leadership useful in seeking to understand the diversity across and within teaching/learning sites where teachers engage in curriculum decision-making?

The centrality of teachers in curriculum leadership is crucially important in **global education** of the 21st Century. It is the time of knowledge explosion and the 'speed' (Bill Gates, 1999) which slip into our daily lives. The fast changes occurred in the social world reveal the fact that the school curriculum can no longer be retained as textbooks, official syllabus, a time-table, a linear progression from aims to outcomes…etc. Curriculum lives in the dynamic interactions and learning experiences of teachers with students, parents, community people, colleagues and other stakeholders. It is such evolving and dynamic that it is hard to give a definition but rather an image or theorising by the teachers who actively involved in all kinds of curriculum practices. If teachers cannot recognise their development in curriculum leadership to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, the question is who can ensure the quality of education by having such fast pace of changes into the school learning and teaching from an outside-in? Are teachers still waiting for the mandated policies to bring innovative changes in children's learning, for example the benchmarking of student performance? How long will it take to make policies and to achieve so-called 'successfully implemented'? Are the teachers professionally justified to be at the best position to make decisions about curriculum on how, what, why, when and where the children can have optimal learning experiences? If not, who can have this central power to bring authentic changes of teachers in making curriculum decisions? From a behavioristic view, teachers can be offered various external rewards to alter their curriculum decisions. But, will these stimuli ensure teachers to be committed in leading curriculum change for the sake of effectiveness of teaching and learning in a **sustainable** manner?

Curriculum *leadership* can become a phenomenon of involving every teacher within the school structure provided that it does not result in a 'power game' and does not intend to increase each person's bossiness. *Leadership* as proposed is to facilitate each professional to gain power from within which eventually the entire organisation grow and develop! The power strength of the whole school is NOT constant in which each staff member seems to have the necessity of struggling with each other in order to transfer power from one to another. Taking a reconstructive perspective, the development and growth of the entire school strengthen the organisational structure in which power of decision-making, power of professionalism, power of educational change continue to increase in parallel with the empowerment of individual teacher within the notion of curriculum leadership. It is a win-win situation. In such case, curriculum leadership will facilitate processes of self-strengthening in terms of each individual teacher and the entire organisational entity (in Chinese words □□□□). Indeed, it needs brave, vision and commitment.

In relation to the second part (focussing on professional development) – for example, are the propositions a useful way of thinking about how we might shape professional development activities that will be supportive?

On one hand, professional development for thinking about teachers in curriculum leadership should address the uniqueness of each learning/teaching site; on the other hand, it should develop some generic principles for guiding such professional development. The propositions as suggested will be a useful way of shaping supportive professional development activities. As such, teachers and principals will go through critical reflections which might be painstaking processes. So far what they have been 'compromised' in curriculum practices need to stir up vigorously in 'spirited debate' which might result in feelings of discomfort. Reconstruction of curriculum practices which are

action-oriented will be a sensible way to harmonise these feelings of discomfort and to envision individual growth.

In relation to the third part (focussing on strategies for professional development) – for example, how do Darling-Hammond's ideas help to take us forward from thinking about professional development to enacting it in ways which seek to see teachers working with teachers and with teacher educators to form strategic and unified alliances in order to advocate for the enhancement of teachers' place and space (or profile) in curriculum decision-making?

Within a cultural context, the voices of teachers should be heard and can be heard clearly. At the same time, other stakeholders have the responsibility to echo these voices by making actions to improve the present scenario. It is important to channel these voices to the policy-makers in drafting policies. These channels have to be created by joint efforts of professionals. These channels and opportunities might NOT be granted from the top. Professional commitment of teaching and curriculum leadership must not be confined within the four walls of the classroom. If so, it is indeed an illusionary education. *What is planned is not implemented; What is implemented is not what planned – the education system is not working*! Professionals should stand up to fight for what is worth fighting for. Strategies for professional development as suggested by Darling-Hammond, I suppose, are to celebrate the importance of intimate and dynamic relationships of knowledge and action, theory and practice, and policy and research.

How might the ideas outlined in the methodological framework above help in taking us forward in our efforts to enhance the profile of teachers in curriculum decision-making?

From the point of teachers

It is important to consider not to silent the voices of teachers but rather to channel every opportunity to elicit their voices by narratives and conversations. Teachers do have rich source of personal practical knowledge that we might find valuable for consideration in thinking further about the central role of teachers in curriculum leadership.

From the point of teacher educators

I am responding to this question from my position as a teacher educator who is practising in a mixed culture with the east and the west, who has been brought up in Chinese traditions and who has been undertaking university education in one western country. In considering the methodological framework, I want to propose five dimensions which might be crucially important to arrive at consensus.

1. Fragmented vs Holistic
2. Objective vs Subjective
3. Generalisable vs Generative
4. Extrinsic reward vs Intrinsic value
5. Sharpness vs Complexity (or Straight-forward vs Iterative, hermeneutic and reflective)

In Chinese philosophy (for example, the practice of Chinese medicine), it does emphasise HOLISTIC, SUBJECTIVITY, REFLECTIVE, INTRINSIC MORAL VALUE...Action Research as an approach to improve and reconstruct the present curriculum practices within the notion of curriculum leadership should be most desirable. This is an excellent idea of not to avoid the complexity and subjectivity of the data collected. Logical analysis is indispensable for managing the data but it is not the integral part of the methodological framework. Having the vision of global education about curriculum leadership, it is certainly meaningful and useful to elicit narratives and form conversations within two spirals of critical friends as suggested.

It is a serious question whether we want to reduce the huge chunk of the data into the world of analysis and conceptualisation embedded within the philosophy of science*. The pursuit of knowledge (or wisdom), the embrace of intrinsic value and the quest for ongoing reflections are justified to exist in this Action Research as proposed.

(*Note: Chinese Science Institute of PRC is considering to merge the discipline of science with subjective values of humankind which are love, kindness and generosity. By doing so, it is expected to

achieve a dialogue between genuineness and kindness in which realises the highest achievement of science and humanity)

FROM DAWN PENNEY

Ian - further comments for AERA paper - apologies that they are relatively brief and do not fit totally with your identified questions - hopefully, though the issues are relevant. I look forward to a copy of your final paper, and I hope, to further communication in the future - I think that this process has shown the value of international collaboration in the field in terms of the insights that we can gain from each others' experiences and contexts. Best regards, Dawn

In addressing curriculum leadership it is useful (and I would add, essential) to be stressing its complexity, and the ways in which multiple figures and sites play various roles in it, and can variously be regarded as curriculum leaders. I think there are dangers in talking of 'macro' and 'micro' levels in relation to this - as this can lead to people seeing only two arenas for action, and also giving rise to hierarchical thinking. Instead, I think there is a need to emphasise the multiplicity of arenas and ways in which curriculum leadership can be developed.

I certainly agree therefore with the notion that 'leadership is a shared phenomenon among a range of stakeholders' but would point to a need to acknowledge the tensions and inequalities inherent here - that certainly, collaborative and complementary relations are what we need to strive for, but invariably, the absence of them, is a key factor in problems arising in curriculum development work. We have to acknowledge that there will always be differential degrees of leadership, and the models put forward need to acknowledge the limits and boundaries to the spaces, places and thus opportunities for leadership. To be supportive, propositions for professional development need to address the structural, systemic and inter-personal aspects relevant to these issues.

In addressing strategies for professional development, there is the emphasis of the centrality of teachers in the process, and I am fully supportive of this, but also point to the need to also be addressing the centrality of students (pupils) in the process. Picking up on some of the comments provided by Marianne, we also need to clarify our claim to 'centrality', again linking back to 'degrees of leadership', inequalities in curriculum development processes - that teachers may see themselves as central, but the centrality is invariably within a specific site and the questions that need to be posed are of how this site and the action within it fits within wider educational, social, political arenas. I also noted from Gayle, the caution in adopting / accepting the label /role of 'leader'. In contexts of ever increasing pressures for accountability and the ' raising of standards', this is perhaps understandable and something that we will see more of. In my own ongoing research focusing on the National Curriculum for Physical Education in England, there seems some evidence to suggest that this is not a role that teachers (particularly non-specialists) desire. Instead, they are looking to 'official guidance', in the form of curriculum support materials produced by government curriculum agencies, for 'leadership' and 'direction' in implementation. Leadership may be a role that teachers take on, but it is leadership in directions and towards outcomes that are defined centrally.

Despite the development of school based management in schools in England and Wales, and the demise of Local Education Authority support structures, there remains support within schools for cluster based developments. Often, it seems that contact with other teachers and other schools is a valuable source of reassurance and support that teachers are not alone in experiencing difficult jobs and times in education. In the main, I think alliances are welcomed, but primarily because support is needed to survive, rather than there being interest in support for innovation.

Relations between schools and teacher training institutions continue to change in England and Wales in response to changing government policy. The key issue shaping the nature of the relations and the respective roles, is that of resourcing of teacher education. Pragmatic rather than educational agendas determine the extent and ways in which notions of curriculum leadership can be pursued, and in both arenas, the key concern is accountability' to the statutory standards established for initial teacher training and statutory requirements for delivery of the national Curriculum, and accountability now to formal contracts between schools and teacher training institutions operating in 'partnership' in the training process.

In relation to how to enhance the profile of both teachers and teacher educators in curriculum development / decision -making, I think the key need is for dissemination of examples of structures and initiatives that have facilitated teachers and teacher educators having greater 'autonomy' /'centrality' in relation to these matters, and for more forums to be created at which individual teachers / teacher educators can address the practicalities of trying to mirror such developments within their local contexts, and who they can look to for ongoing support in any attempts to do so.

FROM PAT THOMSON

Response to Emerging Framework

I want to respond directly to two aspects of the framework. This is a somewhat more critical response, given that you are asking questions like 'how useful', but it sits within my overall response that promoting teacher leadership is really very important. However I offer these comments in the hope that are constructive and might be generative.

In my first response, which refused to play with the suggested frame, I signalled in the case study example the kinds of issues that I, and I imagine some others, may well raise. I will talk about two sets of things: the use of the terms space and place, leading to the question of social relations, and then bodies and emotions.

Place, space and techniques

I'll start by addressing the notion of place and space and by discussing some inter disciplinary issues and some other theorisations that might be helpful (or might not!).

You use the term place to mean a material place like a classroom, a social place like a meeting, a functional place as in making reform , and perhaps through these assert and insert a place in dominant reform narratives which largely ignore teachers.

Like you I also use the words space and place. The language of geography is in the ascendance in many disciplines, including education. Spaces, places, territories, positions, borders, fields, nomads, margins, centres, landscapes, mapping, (post) colonisations and so on have become part of a popular lexicon. In the new geographies and anthropologies, the terms space and place come with significant debates and histories .

I thought it might be helpful to share some of my geography readings - please ignore this if you have already traversed these literatures.

In the new geographies a place is often taken to mean a point that is material, discursive and intra-psychic - that is it has to do with actual things like rooms, chairs, trees as well as with identities, bodies and emotions and with narratives, teleologies, knowledges, and texts. It is in places that people, positioned in particular ways (socially, culturally, economically) go about their lives (e.g. Allen, 1995; Massey, 1992; Massey, 1994; Massey, 1995; Pile & Keith, 1997; Thrift, 1996). This living occurs socially, through acts of agency in which social relations are mediated. A child comes to a place called school and through the social relations that occur in the classroom learns how to be a classed, raced, gendered person with particular embodied behaviours, as well as learning the formal curriculum of the eight key learning areas (Hill, Comber, Louden, Reid, & Rivalland, 1998). A teacher comes to school and learns what it is to be a teacher in this place, a classed, raced and gendered person with particular embodied behaviours that significantly work to produce the former student behaviours. Whatever the teacher does, **does something**. A teacher works to reform the curriculum, to change parent teacher relations, to 'exercise leadership' to **do something**. What and how she does this, depends in part on what she is trying to produce and what her actions do produce. Only certain things are possible in this place, and there are 'ways we do things around here' that must be changed slowly if they can be changed.

Place, as multiply discursive and intrapsychic, is never static, but changes with each act. Nevertheless, it is dominant social relations that are generally produced through the microphysics of acts (mediation), as well as everyday resistances. The important thing is that acts produce something. Separating out the act from what it produces is to ignore the ongoing 'place'. Leadership that does not include looking at the ongoing effects is most likely leadership that reproduced dominant social relations.

This theorisation might help a discuss of leadership, looking at both its possibilities and how it is delimited, because it allows you to look at what acts of leadership produce. It also helps to get beyond saying that all school as places are unique. They are, but they are also a significant place in which the common social relations of class, race and gender are **differently** mediated, produced and reproduced. (I find it difficult to get enthusiastic about any leadership, whether it is teacher, parent of principal, if it does not deal with class issues - my obsession.)The new geographies approach to place goes beyond the Cartesian split (or what Gramsci (1971) described as a focus on the process and the technical) and suggest, by working from the position that place **produces** social relations, that the 'what' and the 'how' are **one and the same .**

Let me now turn to space. The new geographies suggest that while acts occur within a space, a space is never empty and all spaces are not the same. A space is produced within and by (the actors in) a place (material, discursive, intrapsychic). Space is partly (and largely) a product of context and partly a product of agency (e.g. Blunt & Rose, 1994; Soja & Hooper, 1993). Spaces also change and do not remain static. How do teachers find a space? I could talk about Friday afternoon and the library here, but like you I am not in the **first** instance concerned with the material. If we understand space to be multiply discursive, the teacher leadership may well depend on teachers being able to critically read the sets of discourses in their particular place in order to find the ruptures, gaps, and internal contradictory stories. I have argued for example, that the current obsession with computers gives teachers a discursive space to work on literacies other than basic skills because anything they do at a screen is currently narrativised in other terms (Thomson, 1998). Being able to argue in the place/school for particular approach (another aspect of leadership) may be to do with being 'multilingual' (Ball & Gerwitz, 1998) being able to speak to different groups in ways that they understand. Agency may then depend on teachers being critically literate, see (Luke, 1995) - and this would indicate what kind of professional development might be helpful - how to 'read' a place and find the 'space' to speak and act (Soja, 1996).

If this is all to horribly 'postie' then let me tell a little story that makes some of the same points from the old critical frame. The last school where I was principal was a trial school for the key competencies. One of the staff who was responsible for a group of particularly interesting kids was fond of telling Commonwealth visitors that his students already had the key competencies - they communicated well, used technology, worked as a successful team, could do practical maths - and if they cared to order a particular kind of sports shoe, the kids would deliver the same the next day at a very good price. The visitors should ignore the morning news story about vulnerable kids being robbed and beaten up for their shoes. The point of the story is pretty obvious - it isn't just the leadership, team work, group skills etc that are at issue. Its about ethics and morals and justice which a focus on technique ignores entirely.

Bodies and emotions

I now want to go on to talk about the propositions in relation to professional development and suggest that it would be wonderful to develop something that picks up questions of bodies and emotions, not stop at the 'mindset' and 'the intellectual'.

There is an emerging literature that suggests that the emotional component of leadership is highly significant (Hargreaves, 1996), particularly in the devolution context (Blackmore, 1996; Blackmore & Sachs, 1996; Sachs & Blackmore, 1998; Starr, 1998), and that most of the leadership literatures and school selection processes ignore it entirely. The emotional demands of leadership are highly gendered with women often being expected to 'do more' to 'look after' other people than their male counterparts, despite the leadership literature focussing on this as a general trait. In other words, in the spaces and places of school reform, people are emotionally/bodily positioned in particular gendered ways (Nast & Pile, 1998).

There are several possible responses to the literature, one of which is more research because the way I read it suggests there is a tendency to essentialise gender and also because it has largely focussed on school administrators rather than teachers. Another might be to look at how professional development might take this on board. Kenway and Willis (1997) for example, in their work on teachers and gender reform, discuss this and Kenway talks of the need for leaders in gender reform to have 'emotional literacy'[1]. Another approach might be to look at the emotional geographies of school reform and what

[1] Personal communication

does go on in 'this place' - in this school what emotional demands are made of leaders and what emotional behaviours are expected.

I want to complicate this further by talking about habitus. Bourdieu (e.g. 1984; 1990; 1998) proposes that habitus is not based on reason, but rather is a 'feel for the game' that produces a particular logic of practice. This feel for the game is embodied. Much of what the teacher does in the classroom is not the product of intense reasoning but rather is instinctive, it 'just happens' because it is based on learning that has been produced over time. Teachers make decisions based on a reading of the situation, a moral framework and the 'feel for the game'. What they can do also has to meet their 'interests which are shaped by power, economic and 'status' interests (see Littrell and Foster (1995) for an interesting case study of an administrator 'habitus' at work).Habitus can be disrupted and changed through explicit and reflexive practices that aim to disrupt the categories of perception, bodily and emotional behaviours that make up this 'feel for the game'.

There are several implications of this theorisation, of which I will mention only four:

1. The 'interests of administrators' may well be to maintain power over teachers and teacher leadership that works in directions that look to change those relations will founder unless that power relationship is explicitly part of the 'professional development' project. This 'interest' may be embodied as much as it is narratavised and this points at the kinds of activities that might be undertaken.
2. Teachers are currently being produced by policy as compliant implementers rather than as leaders and their performance 'managed' and judged' on this basis. It is therefore not necessarily in teachers 'interests' to act other wise. More than professional development may be required. This makes the role of the principal more important or the role of the union/ professional association more significant in working to support/produce other 'interests'.
3. Teachers may well act in ways contrary to their expressed desire for leadership, because of the habitus that is produced over time and in particular places (lost for words, feeling uncertain, doing what is expected rather than speaking up, wanting to be approved of rather etc are often explained as 'unassertive' that is individual, rather than habitus which is social). Reflexive activities that focus on the 'feel for the leadership game' may be important.
4. Discussion/debate/research on how to grow teacher leadership habitus is significant for both school administrators and preservice educators. School administrators in particular need to think how it is that they can 'socially' produce leadership in the school, not just individually. They need to be able to deconstruct the institutional practices in the school that produce efficient subservience in order to reconstruct those that produce leadership. (This goes further than saying that professional development of teachers and principals is intimately related)

Conclusion

Let me finish by saying that I think the process of multiple writings and readings that you have constructed is a very interesting one in which I am pleased to have participated. I hope that these comments I have made, togethr with the others, might spark off further trains of thought, which is what you generously invite through the iterative process you have constructed.

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APPENDIX C

An invitation to be part of a continuing conversation

Yes, I would like to be a part of a continuing conversation.

My name is: .....

My current workplace is: .....

Which is at: .....

My E Mail address is : _____

Any initial comments you might have which may facilititate our initiation of an ongoing conversation

Thank you for your interest

Please leave with Ross or Ian before you leave.